
Introduction

Design to Sell is for anyone who wants to use design to increase sales and profits through more effective and efficient marketing. It takes proven design and marketing principles and shows you how to achieve professional-level results using Microsoft Office Publisher, a robust and readily-available software program already found on hundreds of thousands of personal computers throughout the world.

I've long felt that Microsoft Publisher can make more of an immediate impact to the bottom line success of the vast majority of associations, businesses, and individuals, than any other software program. This book is a testament to that belief.

Who Should Buy This Book?

I wrote *Design to Sell* for readers who resemble the clients around the world whom I've had the good fortune to work with. These clients work in a variety of businesses, small to large, and share many characteristics.

Typically, they are self-starters, they have a mission to perform, and they want to do as much of the work themselves because they are not comfortable paying others to perform services they can neither comfortably afford nor fully understand.

They also take pride in mastering any new skills needed to promote their firm's mission, success, and profits, so they're willing to roll up their sleeves and do the work needed to help their venture succeed. They believe in investing in themselves. These individuals are typically found among the following categories of businesses:

- Self-employed professionals striving to establish a name for themselves. Because they're just starting out, these individuals have few, if any, additional resources at their disposal.
- Owners and marketing managers at start-ups and medium-sized businesses. These individuals want more hands-on involvement in their firm's marketing, because they need to save money and enjoy telling their firm's story.
- Department and product managers inside large firms. These individuals generally need to wring every penny out of their marketing budgets.

- Association, education, and non-profit executives. These individuals must keep their constituents and supporters informed and enthusiastic, and they generally don't have separate marketing budgets.

Why Design Matters

When asked why design is important, Jay Conrad Levinson—author of the best-selling *Guerrilla Marketing* series of books—responded:

Regardless of the brilliance of your words, your idea, and your offer, unless somebody actually looks at them, they are lost in that enormous vacuum of invisibility. How do you get people to look at them and begin to like them? One word answer: Design.

As Dan Pink, author of *A Whole New Mind*, his study of the six most needed mental capabilities needed to survive in contemporary America, recently stated: “*Today, design is everyone’s business!*”

My goal is to help you use design as a competitive tool, a tool that will help you profit from both the accumulated wisdom of graphic designers and visual communicators extending back hundreds of years, coupled with the technical virtuosity of Microsoft Publisher running on today’s ubiquitous personal computers.

How Much Do You Need to Know About Design?

Design to Sell is based on a simple premise: you do not need to be a designer to profit from design!

You need to know enough about design to appreciate its power. You must understand the how’s and the why’s. And you must know how to apply previously-made design decisions while producing your ongoing marketing communications. But you don’t need to spend all your time designing to put design to good use!

Why Publisher?

Microsoft Publisher is not the most expensive page layout software program available. Neither is it one of the two expensive and sophisticated software programs used by professional New York City and San Francisco design professionals to prepare fancy annual reports, advertisements, and glossy magazines.

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But, at about a third of the price of its top echelon competitors, Microsoft Publisher can take a firm or individual with no platform—no tangible way of communicating their competence and expertise—and give them the ability to build and promote their brand and consistently keep in touch.

I know this is true, because I've been helping clients and friends do this for years. (As you read this book, you'll find several examples of Publisher-powered "obscurity to awareness" successes.)

Straight Talk About Capabilities

In a world where consumers obsess over product "specifications," few buyers actually ever approach the outer limits of their possession's performance capabilities.

Take automobiles, for example: "Which cars offer the best performance: BMW, Mercedes-Benz, or Porsche?" In nearly every case, the limiting factor is not the car, but the driver's ability to control it.

Likewise, it's as possible to create commonplace, hard-to-read marketing messages with more expensive programs, as it is to use Publisher to create an ongoing stream of attractive marketing materials that can take you, your firm, or your client's, to new levels of prosperity and profitability.

What You'll Learn in This book

Design to sell is divided into four parts, each part focused on the keys to marketing your message effectively.

Part One: Perspective on Marketing with Design In Part One, you'll learn the basics of creating effective, reader-friendly marketing messages your clients and prospects will want to read. Part One provides a design and marketing context for the information that follows.

Part Two: Jumpstarting Your Page Layout Skills The chapters found in Part Two cover how to use Microsoft Publisher to translate what you've just learned about design and marketing into effective marketing messages. You'll learn how to create a structure for design success and how to populate it with appropriately formatted text. You'll also learn how to enhance what you've created so far, and how to duplicate and distribute error-free marketing messages.

Part Three: Putting Publisher to Work In this section, you'll learn how to apply what you've learned to specific categories of marketing messages: ads, brochures, newsletters, postcards, and other projects.

Part Four: Wrapping It Up Finally, we look at several before-and-after versions of publications, each with important lessons to teach. The section concludes with a quick review of how you can use the lessons in this books to avoid common problems.

Companion Web Site *Design to Sell* readers are invited to visit www.designtosellonline.com, where you'll find additional content to supplement the book. The content you'll find includes downloadable worksheets, tests to check yourself, and updated resources.

The Most Important Lesson

Ultimately, *Design to Sell* is based on a simple premise: Design once, produce often. This simple statement reflects everything I've learned about marketing during the last twenty-five years of helping firms and individuals create a presence for themselves in a crowded market.

There is often a fundamental difference to be observed between graphic designers and those who simply use design to become spectacularly successful in business.

- For designers, the challenge—and often the reward—is to constantly reinvent the wheel in new and better ways.
- For those who aspire to business success, however, the challenge is to use and reuse fundamentally strong designs in a way that permits constant contact with clients and prospects.

I dedicate *Design to Sell* to those who are attracted to the second alternative, and I thank my clients around the world whose real-world successes provided the ultimate foundation for this book.

Roger C. Parker
February, 2006
Dover, NH

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 We want to hear from you!

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Advance Praise for *Design to Sell*

Design is everyone's business, and Roger C. Parker shows you how to do it right!

—Daniel H. Pink, author, *A Whole New Mind*, www.danpink.com

What a needed book by Roger Parker, a dean of design! Today's multi-tasking generations will give your printed materials more than a split second's worth of attention with attractive design. Learn what you need to make this happen.

—Paul and Sarah Edwards, authors of 16 books including a new edition of *Making Money with Your Computer at Home*, www.workingfromhome.com

In Design to Sell, the dependable Roger Parker has produced yet another of his insightful guides. As always, he is down-to-earth and practical in everything he recommends. Furthermore, he explains why he recommends it and why it will work, and the-the height of usefulness-shows how to apply it.

—Jan V. White, communication design consultant; author, *Editing by Design*.

Nobody does a better job of showing how to use design to build lasting customer relationships than Roger C. Parker.

—Jay Conrad Levinson, author, *Guerrilla Marketing*,
www.guerillamarketingassociation.com

Today, design is more than a pretty picture—it is business strategy. Learn from Roger how to design your own way to success!

—Cliff Atkinson, author, *Beyond Bullet Points*, www.sociablemedia.com

Big firms, with bottomless pockets, can hire expensive designers to help them tap into the power of design. Until now, smaller firms have usually had to do without. Now, however, Design to Sell provides the step-by-step guidance firms of all sizes need to use Microsoft Publisher to make design work for them-instead of against them.

—Doug Hall, author, *Jump Start Your Business Brain*, host, BrainBrew Radio,
www.brainbrewradio.com

The key to our successful launch of the Island Institute 22 years ago was our annual Island Journal and a variety of other design-coordinated materials, and throughout, Roger Parker's consistently solid design and marketing counsel have kept us on the right heading. The success of our current campaign has only re-enforced the understanding that even the best "product" will benefit tremendously if it is clearly presented in a compelling and well designed manner. Roger Parker's sense of these qualities is unsurpassed!

—Peter Ralston, Vice President and Co-Founder, Island Institute, Maine
www.islandinstitute.org

I am a great fan of Roger C. Parker...the design genius of our generation who has taught desktop publishing excellence to hundreds of thousands.

—Dr. Ralph Wilson, Internet Marketing Authority, www.wilsonweb.com

We all need a visual edge to be noticed, read, and remembered. Design to Sell combines Roger's wisdom and experience as a writer and design expert with a user-friendly set of keys that permits you to unlock the full functionality of Microsoft Publisher.

—William Reed, Tokyo, author, *Mind Mapping for Memory and Creativity*, #1 best-seller, Amazon Japan, www.b-smart.net.

As always, Roger Parker is the pioneer in thinking and writing about design-treating design as an RIO-generating business tool and not a purely aesthetic function. With his clear, simple instructions, you will understand both the real purpose of design in business-to drive sales-as well as how to create materials that achieve that function using Microsoft Publisher.

—Robert W. Bly, author, *The Copywriter's Handbook*, www.bly.com

The worksheets in this book, alone, are worth the investment. Design to Sell not only showed me how to use Publisher to produce my own newsletter, but also showed me how to turn it from good to great! The details are amazing.

—Sean Greeley, www.wakeupmarketing.com
Sean@WakeUpTraining.com

From creating your message to grabbing the attention of your audience, Roger's Design to Sell has the steps you need to succeed in creating your own marketing pieces. I especially love the "ten tasks" that you will do over and over again. His action steps provide non-designers, like myself, the detailed help we need to market ourselves using one of the most popular software programs available.

—Romanus Wolter,
Entrepreneur's magazine's Success Coach and author, *Kick Start Your Success*,
www.kickstartguy.com

This is the book I recommend to our clients, large and small, who want to plan and create their own postcards as quickly and efficiently as possible. Design to Sell is the perfect complement to today's advancing technology.

—Steven Willen
President, AmazingMail.com

Roger C. Parker is a design evangelist who helps those who need design help the most: those who must produce their own marketing materials on a tight budget, even though they have had no previous design experience! Use this book to save time, money, and headaches.

—Kathi Dunn, award-winning designer for best-selling authors, fast-track speakers and leading experts, www.dunn-design.com

Design to Sell helped me learn how to give my printed material a visual edge without having to spend thousands of dollars or years of study. It should be compulsory reading in any marketing course aimed at small and medium businesses.

—Bryan O'Shannassy, Bryan O'Shannassy & Associates, Australia

Using the techniques Roger taught me, I was able to cut \$10,000 from my advertising budget while attracting better-qualified prospects!

—Gene Paltrineri, Certified Master Photographer, www.genepaltrineri.com